

Chapter 4 Guidance  
Frequently Asked Questions

Question	Response
<b>Keystone Exam Proficiency</b>	
1. If a student is in his/her senior year and has taken the Keystone Exam only once, can that student move right to the Project Based Assessment (PBA)?	<p>Beginning with the class of 2016-17, a student in twelfth grade who has taken the Keystone Exam only once can move directly to the PBA provided that the student also has taken the course, meets local attendance requirements and has participated in supplemental instruction to the satisfaction of the LEA.</p> <p>Chapter 4 Reference: 22 Pa. Code 4.51c(c)</p>
2. For accountability purposes (PA School Performance Profile), Keystone scores are banked until grade 11. Is there a date by which a student's grade determination is made?	<p>Yes, the PIMS snapshot from the end of May is used for this purpose. Therefore, the "best score" to date will be used for all students reported by LEAs in grade 11 on the May PIMS snapshot.</p>
3. May a student test out of a Keystone course by demonstrating proficiency on the Keystone Exam and never take the course?	<p>Chapter 4 allows a student to take a Keystone Exam prior to taking the associated coursework if the student previously demonstrated academic excellence in the content area by achieving a score of Advanced on the most recent associated PSSA or, for out-of-state transfer students, a comparable score on a comparable assessment administered by another state.</p> <p>While students who meet these criteria must be afforded the opportunity to take a Keystone Exam in advance of the associated coursework, whether a student is granted course credit without having to complete the course is a local decision made by the LEA. However, an LEA may choose to award course credit only if the student scores Advanced on the Keystone Exam.</p> <p>Chapter 4 Reference: 22 Pa. Code 4.24(c)(1)(iii)(A)(I-III)</p>

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<p>4. If a student has not demonstrated proficiency on the Keystone Exams, Advanced Placement test or the IB exam, is the PBA required for graduation?</p>	<p>Yes. The PBA is an alternative pathway to graduation and would be required if the student has not demonstrated proficiency on one of the exams so noted (effective with the graduating class of 2017). (See Special Education and ELL section for further clarification on this topic.)</p> <p>Chapter 4 Reference: 22 Pa. Code 4.24(c)(iii)(A); 22 Pa. Code 4.51c</p>																																												
<p>5. What scores for AP and IB exams are comparable to the Proficient_level on the Keystone Exams for the purpose of meeting state graduation requirements?</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3" style="text-align: center;">AP Options</th> </tr> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Keystone Exam</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Comparable AP Exams</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Score</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td rowspan="3" style="vertical-align: top;">Algebra I</td> <td>Calculus AB</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Calculus BC</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Statistics</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="3" style="vertical-align: top;">Literature</td> <td>English Language and Composition</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>English Literature</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Biology</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="3" style="text-align: center;">IB Options</th> </tr> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Keystone Exam</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Comparable IB Exams</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Score</th> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="4" style="vertical-align: top;">Algebra I</td> <td>Mathematical Studies – Standard Level (SL)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mathematics – Standard Level (SL)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mathematics – High Level (HL)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Further Mathematics – High Level (HL)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="4" style="vertical-align: top;">Literature</td> <td>Language A – Literature (SL)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Language A – Literature and Literature (SL)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Language A – Literature (HL)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Language A – Literature and Literature (HL)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	AP Options			Keystone Exam	Comparable AP Exams	Score	Algebra I	Calculus AB	3	Calculus BC	3	Statistics	3	Literature	English Language and Composition	3	English Literature	3	Biology	3	IB Options			Keystone Exam	Comparable IB Exams	Score	Algebra I	Mathematical Studies – Standard Level (SL)	4	Mathematics – Standard Level (SL)	4	Mathematics – High Level (HL)	3	Further Mathematics – High Level (HL)	3	Literature	Language A – Literature (SL)	4	Language A – Literature and Literature (SL)	4	Language A – Literature (HL)	3	Language A – Literature and Literature (HL)	3
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6. Are students who score a 3 or higher on an AP exam or 4 or higher on an IB exam, which are designated as exams meeting state graduation requirements, required to take the Keystone Exams?	Yes. While AP and IB exams may be used to meet state graduation requirements, all students are required to participate in a state assessment for federal accountability purposes.
7. What guidance for meeting state graduation requirements is offered for reviewing and accepting assessments from students who come from out of state or other countries?	<p>If a student transfers into a Pennsylvania high school from out of state, a private school, a home school, or from out of country, and that student's transcript shows credit received in Algebra 1, or an equivalent course; Literature, or an equivalent course; or Biology 1, or an equivalent course, the decision as to whether the student must take Pennsylvania's statewide, standardized end-of-course Keystone Exam in Algebra 1, Literature, or Biology, respectively, shall be made by the school principal using the following guidance:</p> <p>(a) A transfer student will not be required to take the Keystone Exam in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Algebra 1 if the student passed a statewide, standardized End-of-Course (EOC) assessment in that course, if administered by the transferring school/district, or achieved a passing/proficient score on the high school statewide assessment in mathematics required by the state from which the student transferred for purposes of satisfying the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §§ 6301 <i>et seq.</i>, or if the student achieves a score on the AP or IB Exams equal to or higher than those listed in Question 5.</li> <li>2. Literature if the student passed a statewide, standardized EOC assessment in that course, if administered by the transferring school, or achieved a passing/proficient score on the high school statewide assessment in literature/language arts required by the state from which the student transferred for purposes of satisfying the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §§. 6301 <i>et seq.</i>, or if the student achieves a score on the AP or IB Exams equal to or higher than those listed in Question 5.</li> <li>3. Biology EOC Assessment if the student passed a statewide, standardized EOC</li> </ol>

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	<p>assessment in that course, if administered by the transferring school, or achieved a passing/proficient score on the high school statewide assessment in science required by the state from which the student transferred for purposes of satisfying the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §§. 6301<i>et seq.</i>, or if the student achieves a score on the AP or IB Exams equal to or higher than those listed in Question 5.</p> <p>(b) A transfer student will take Keystone Exams in Algebra 1, Literature, and Biology under all other circumstances and must pass the EOC assessments in order to determine whether or not the student has demonstrated proficiency in the academic standards.</p> <p>(See also Question 22)</p> <p>Chapter 4 Reference: 22 Pa. Code 4.24(l)</p>
<p>8. Must CTE students graduating in the class of 2017 or beyond demonstrate proficiency in Algebra I, Biology, and Literature and a Pennsylvania State Skills Assessment in order to graduate?</p>	<p>Students must demonstrate proficiency in the three Keystone Exams. Proficiency on a State Skills Assessment is not a state graduation requirement.</p>
<p><b>Opt Out</b></p>	
<p>9. Is there a window for parents or guardians to review a Keystone Exam in order to determine whether or not there is a religious objection to the assessment?</p>	<p>Test materials should be available for review two weeks prior to the state testing window and should be reviewed prior to the first administration of the actual assessment.</p> <p>(For schools that administer online testing, it is recommended that they order one paper copy of each assessment in order to have a copy available for parent or guardian review.)</p> <p>Chapter 4 Reference: 22 Pa. Code 4.4(d)(4)</p>
<p>10. How does an LEA determine if a letter submitted by a parent meets the requirements in Chapter 4 to qualify for a religious opt-out?</p>	<p>If after reviewing the state assessment a parent provides the school with a written request that states a religious objection to the superintendent, CEO, or AVTS Director, the child(ren) should be excused from the state assessment. So, as long as a parent or guardian reviews the state assessment and provides a written statement providing his/her written objection for religious purposes (however vague that</p>

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	<p>objection may be), the child must be excused from the assessment. PDE will not provide an opinion as to what is a proper religious objection.</p> <p>LEAs should keep records related to all opt-out requests, even if the request is not compliant with the procedures outlined in Chapter 4.</p> <p>Chapter 4 Reference: 22 Pa. Code 4.4(d)(4)</p>
<p>11. If a parent refuses to allow his/her child to take both keystones and the PBAs, how can a student graduate?</p>	<p>Chapter 4 allows a parent or guardian to opt a child out of a state assessment. Per the definitions in 22 Pa. Code 4.3, the PBA is NOT a state assessment. Thus, Chapter 4 does not permit opting out of the PBA. The PBA is an alternative pathway to graduation and if the student does not successfully complete the PBA, s/he may not graduate.</p> <p>Chapter 4 Reference: 22 Pa. Code 4.3; 22 Pa. Code 4.4(d)(4); 22 Pa. Code 4.24(c)(1)(iii)(A)</p>
<p>12. Can a parent request an opt out of the Keystone Exam retest for religious reasons?</p>	<p>The opt out for religious reasons may be exercised, provided that the parent adheres to the proper procedures as described above. (See Question 9.)</p> <p>Chapter 4 Reference: 22 Pa. Code 4.4(d)(4)</p>
<p><b>Keystone Exams - Supplemental Instruction</b></p>	
<p>13. Who delivers supplemental instruction?</p>	<p>It is recommended that supplemental instruction be delivered by an educator certified in the content area of the respective Keystone Exam; however, if supplemental instruction is offered as a credit-bearing course, the instructor must be certified in the content area.</p>
<p>14. How much supplemental instruction is required between Keystone Exam administrations?</p>	<p>Design and duration of the supplemental instruction are an LEA decision. Chapter 4 does not address what constitutes supplemental instruction.</p> <p>Chapter 4 Reference: 22 Pa. Code 4.51b(d); 22 Pa. Code 4.51b(f)</p>
<p>15. Can a parent refuse supplemental instruction?</p>	<p>Chapter 4 requires that students must participate in supplemental instruction in a satisfactory manner before retaking any Keystone Exam or Keystone Exam module.</p> <p>Chapter 4 Reference: 22 Pa. Code 4.51b(d); 22 Pa. Code 4.51b(f)</p>
<p><b>Waiver</b></p>	
<p>16. Are IEP students counted as part of the 10 percent if a</p>	<p>If an IEP specifies a pathway to graduation other than the Keystone Exam or PBA,</p>

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waiver is used?	then those students are not counted as part of the 10%.
17. A chief school administrator may waive state graduation requirements on “a case-by-case basis for good cause” “to accommodate a student who experiences extenuating circumstances.” Are circumstances limited to those listed in 4.51d?	No, the list provides examples of extenuating circumstances, but it is not all inclusive.
<b>Transcripts</b>	
18. If an IEP indicates no PBA, what is displayed on the transcript?	<p>The transcript reflects the highest proficiency level earned on the Keystone Exam or PASA.</p> <p>Chapter 4 Reference: 22 Pa. Code 4.24(i)</p>
19. What is recorded on the transcript of a student who did not take the Keystone Exams or the PBA?	<p>Chapter 4 does not provide an opt out of the PBA. Failure to successfully complete a PBA would result in no mark/designation on the transcript.</p> <p>Chapter 4 Reference: 22 Pa. Code 4.24(c)(1)(iii)(A); 22 Pa. Code 4.24(i); 22 Pa. Code 4.51c</p>
20. Should 8 <sup>th</sup> grade PSSA scores be included on a high school transcript?	<p>The requirement to include PSSA scores ended in the 2012-13 school year.</p> <p>Chapter 4 Reference: 22 Pa. Code 4.24(i)</p>
21. Do the performance levels only appear on the final transcript (sent in spring of senior year) or are they included once they are taken for the first time? In other words, would the performance level for an 8 <sup>th</sup> grader who took the Keystone Exam be placed on his/her transcript right away?	<p>Transcripts must reflect the highest performance level at the time a transcript is produced. Therefore, the information reported on a student transcript may change over time as students retake a Keystone Exam or participate in PBA.</p> <p>This requirement takes effect with the class of 2016-17.</p> <p>Chapter 4 Reference: 22 Pa. Code 4.24(i)</p>
22. Chapter 4 indicates that LEAs can accept out-of-state transfer students as having completed the Keystone content and associated statewide assessment. If a student, for example, passed a New York Regents in Algebra and the LEA agrees that s/he has met the Keystone requirements, how do they document that? Do they still need to have it recorded as Proficient on the transcript?	<p>Once an LEA has verified an out-of-state transfer test score, PDE will provide direction for documenting such for federal accountability purposes. The transfer test score will be included for purposes of the SPP.</p> <p>If a student has already scored Proficient on an out-of-state assessment, that score may be included for purposes of the SPP.</p> <p>The transcript should reflect the subject and the proficiency level of the student and</p>

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	<p>the state in which the assessment was administered.</p> <p>Chapter 4 reference: 22 Pa. Code 4.24(i)</p>
<b>Special Education/English Language Learners</b>	
<p>23. Can an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) stipulate that a student doesn't have to participate in the PBA?</p>	<p>Yes, if after taking the Keystone Exams or PASA required to meet federal accountability requirements, an IEP team may make a decision, and therefore document via the IEP, that the student will graduate based upon satisfactorily completing a special education program as developed by the student's IEP team.</p> <p>Chapter 4 Reference: 22 Pa. Code 4.24(g)</p>
<p>24. Who makes the determination of how a student with an IEP meets graduation requirements if the first attempt on the Keystone Exams is unsuccessful? How is this documented?</p>	<p>Determination of how a student with a disability meets his graduation requirements is determined and documented by the IEP team through the IEP process.</p> <p>After taking the Keystone Exams or PASA, the IEP team may make a decision that the student will graduate based upon satisfactorily completing a special education program as developed by the students' IEP team or through a credit-based approach.</p>
<p>25. In some cases, special education students not eligible for the PASA do not enroll in biology classes. Are these students required to take the Biology Keystone Exam?</p>	<p>Federal law requires that all students, including students with disabilities, participate in statewide assessments. In Pennsylvania, the Keystone Exams fulfill the state requirement of the secondary statewide assessment (replacing the previous 11<sup>th</sup> grade PSSA). If a student is not participating in the PASA (the statewide assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities), the student must participate in the Algebra 1, Literature, and Biology Keystone Exams by the end of 11<sup>th</sup> grade in order to comply with the federal accountability requirements.</p> <p>Reference: 34 CFR 300.160</p>
<p>26. What PSSA and Keystone Exam accommodations are available for ELLs?</p>	<p>The annually published <i>Accommodations Guidelines for ELLs</i> describe the allowable accommodations for the PSSA and Keystone Exams.</p> <p>Chapter 4 Reference: 22 Pa. Code 4.51(l); 22 Pa. Code 4.51b(h)</p>
<p>27. What accommodations are available for a student with an IEP who will be taking the PBA?</p>	<p>If the IEP team determines that a student will take the PBA, the IEP team will determine what accommodations and/or specially designed instruction (SDI) is allowable. The accommodations/ SDI must be documented in the annual IEP as the accommodations for the PBA.</p>

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28. What does supplemental instruction that is “consistent with the student’s educational program” look like for ELLs?	Supplemental instruction must be based on a student’s English language proficiency level and must include appropriate adaptations. Design and duration of the supplemental instruction are an LEA decision.
29. Do students have to be proficient in the English language to graduate? (By definition, ELLs are not proficient in the comprehension or production of English.)	Chapter 4 does not specifically require that students be proficient in English to graduate. However, starting with the 2016-17 graduating class, students must demonstrate proficiency in the academic standards of English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Technology and Environment and Ecology. Student proficiency is determined through achieving proficiency on the associated Keystone Exam, related PBA, a locally approved assessment or completion of an AP or IB exam that includes academic content comparable to the appropriate Keystone Exam.
30. Must ELL students in their first year in the United States participate in the Keystone Exams?	<p>ELL students in their first year in a U.S. school are not required to take the Keystone Exam in Literature.</p> <p>For both federal and state accountability, students in their first year in a U.S. school must take the Algebra I and Biology Keystone Exams if they are completing the associated Keystone course; however, only their participation is counted.</p>
31. Are ELLs who are newly enrolled in the U.S. in high school eligible for the waiver?	<p>A chief school administrator (CSA) may issue waivers to state graduation requirements on a case-by-case basis. Waivers may be issued to students who transfer from an out-of-state school in grade 12 (including international transfers) or who experience other extenuating circumstances. Prior to granting a waiver, the CSA must certify that the student meets the following conditions: has met local graduation requirements, has not demonstrated proficiency on a Keystone Exam, has participated in supplemental instruction to the satisfaction of the LEA (if applicable), and has not successfully completed a PBA.</p> <p>Chapter 4 Reference: 22 Pa. Code 4.51d</p>
<b>Project Based Assessment (PBA)</b>	
32. Can a student retake the Keystone Exam if a satisfactory score has already been earned on PBA?	<p>Once a student scores Satisfactory on the PBA, the student has met state graduation requirements.</p> <p>A student may retake a Keystone Exam even if s/he has scored Satisfactory on the PBA; however, the student may not be required to participate in a retest.</p> <p>Chapter 4 Reference: 22 Pa. Code 4.51b(d)</p>



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<p>33. Is it mandatory for high schools to allow students to participate in a PBA or is this at the discretion of the LEA/principal? Can a principal refuse to allow a student access to a PBA and require a student take a Keystone Exam a third time?</p>	<p>It is permissible for students who are not proficient to take a Keystone Exam more than twice, but it is not required as a matter of state policy. Per Chapter 4, students who meet the requirements for participation may not be denied access to the PBAs.</p> <p>An LEA does not need to seek permission from the Department if it makes a local decision to retest a student who was not proficient after two administrations of a Keystone Exam. The Department does not track the number of times keystones are taken beyond two attempts as part of its current practice, but the Department could determine this information.</p> <p>Chapter 4 Reference: 22 Pa. Code 4.51c</p>
<p>34. Is the PBA available to students who will graduate before 2016-17?</p>	<p>No. Its sole purpose is to satisfy state graduation requirements.</p>